

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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 IN RE: :  
 :  
 THE EL FARO INCIDENT OFF : NTSB Accident No.  
 THE COAST OF THE BAHAMAS ON : DCA16MM001  
 OCTOBER 1, 2015 :  
 :  
 ----- :

Interview of: [REDACTED]

Thursday,  
February 11, 2016

Via teleconference

BEFORE:

JON FURUKAWA, NTSB  
 PAUL WEBB, U.S. Coast Guard  
 PATTY FINSTERBUSCH, TOTE Services  
 LOUIS O'DONNELL, ABS Americas Division

This transcript was produced from audio provided by the National Transportation Safety Board.

## APPEARANCES:

On Behalf of the Interviewee:

LT [REDACTED] JAG Corps

TABLE OF CORRECTIONS TO TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW FOR

[REDACTED]

TAKEN ON  
February 11, 2016

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4	23	Commander	for my airman
4	23	at this station	stationed
5	13	would probably be	are to properly be
8	1	Outback	OPBAT
19	5	MR. [REDACTED]	MR. WEBB
19	12	MR. [REDACTED]	MR. WEBB
20	5	Op-BTC	OPBAT
20	15	Op-BTC watch standard	OPBAT watchstander
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23	16-17	were the treaties, was that one stories per day	were the three days, was that one sortie per day
23	18	Call	recall
24	3	Stories	sorties
24	18	Pilot and command	Pilot-in-Command
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If, to the best of your knowledge, no corrections are needed kindly circle the statement "no corrections needed" and initial in the space provided.

NO CORRECTIONS NEEDED. \_\_\_\_\_  
Initials

[REDACTED]

Printed Name of Person providing the above information

[REDACTED]

Signature of Person providing the above information

3/23/16

Date

P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

(2:08 p.m.)

MR. FURUKAWA: Okay, it is Thursday,  
February 11, 2016. It is 1408 Eastern Standard Time.

This is Jon Furukawa, the NTSB Group  
Chairman for Survival Factors.

We're here to interview Aviation Survival  
Technician Second Class [REDACTED] And, he was  
the rescue swimmer during the El Faro sinking.

And, I'll just call you [REDACTED] And, [REDACTED] do  
you acknowledge that this interview is being recorded?

MR. [REDACTED] Yes, I do.

MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. And, do you  
acknowledge that we've discussed the NTSB mandatory  
briefing items?

MR. [REDACTED] Yes, we have.

MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. And, for the  
transcriber, I'm going to go around again and have  
everybody state their name and their organization so  
the transcriber can transcribe.

So, like I said, this is Jon Furukawa, NTSB.  
Paul, why don't you go next?

MR. WEBB: Paul Webb, U.S. Coast Guard.

MR. FURUKAWA: Patty?

MS. FINSTERBUSCH: Patty Finsterbusch, TOTE

1 Services.

2 MR. FURUKAWA: Louis?

3 MR. O'DONNELL: Louis O'Donnell, ABS.

4 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay, [REDACTED]

5 MR. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] AST II at Air

6 Station Clearwater.

7 MR. FURUKAWA: And, [REDACTED]

8 MR. [REDACTED] Lieutenant [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Office  
9 of Maritime and International Law, representing the  
10 witness.

11 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay, thank you.

12 And, I'd like to start off, [REDACTED] can you  
13 tell us about your professional background? How old  
14 are you?

15 MR. [REDACTED] I am 27 years old.

16 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. And, can you go ahead  
17 and give us your professional background? When you  
18 enlisted in the Coast Guard and bring us up to date?

19 MR. [REDACTED] I joined the Coast Guard in  
20 2008. I did about a year and a month on a Coast Guard  
21 cutter out of Fort Pierce, Florida, an 87 foot patrol  
22 boat.

23 I went to Air Station Miami Commander  
24 program for six months. Went to A School for another  
25 18 weeks and then I've been at this station out of Air

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1 Station Clearwater for the past roughly about five  
2 years.

3 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. And, so [REDACTED] you've  
4 been an air rescue crewman for five years?

5 MR. [REDACTED] That is correct.

6 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. Let's see, okay, does  
7 anybody have any questions about [REDACTED] professional  
8 background?

9 MR. WEBB: This is Paul Webb.

10 Can you explain the primary duties of an  
11 AST?

12 MR. [REDACTED] Yes. The primary duties of a  
13 rescue swimmer would probably be deployed when the  
14 aircraft commander sees fit to save a life or property.

15 MR. WEBB: Okay, anything else? Are there  
16 any other job duties you have besides deploying into  
17 the water? Direct deployments or things like that?  
18 Any EMT or anything like that?

19 MR. [REDACTED] Yes, that is all correct.

20 MR. WEBB: Okay.

21 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay, Patty?

22 MS. FINSTERBUSCH: No questions at this  
23 time.

24 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. Paul, did I step on  
25 you?

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1 MR. WEBB: Yes, I had just a couple more  
2 kind of to see, fill in his background there.

3 How many rescues have you been involved  
4 with? Do you have any idea since you became an AST?

5 MR. [REDACTED] Honestly, off the top of my  
6 head, I do not know.

7 MR. WEBB: Have you been involved with any  
8 body recoveries before?

9 MR. [REDACTED] No, that was the first  
10 experience with a deceased.

11 MR. WEBB: Okay. Do you know if the Coast  
12 Guard had written policy on body recovery?

13 MR. [REDACTED] I am not aware.

14 MR. WEBB: Okay, thank you.

15 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay, [REDACTED] this Jon Furukawa  
16 again.

17 For the rescues, you didn't know, but is it  
18 more than ten?

19 MR. [REDACTED] That would be safe to say,  
20 yes.

21 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay, how about 50?

22 MR. [REDACTED] No.

23 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay, so if you -- can you  
24 guess about how many rescues you've deployed on?

25 MR. [REDACTED] If I had to speculate,

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1 probably 20-something, 25.

2 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay, 25-ish? Okay, thank  
3 you.

4 Louis, did you have any questions about  
5 professional background?

6 MR. O'DONNELL: No further questions.

7 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. Okay, thank you, [REDACTED]  
8 Let's see, so we'd like to go back to the El  
9 Faro, the day that you deployed in the water and  
10 discovered the human remains in the survival suit, can  
11 you go ahead and tell us about that day? I guess, to  
12 start off with, the weather, the sea state and the  
13 wind? You know, how was the weather, you know, the  
14 seas and the wind that day?

15 LT. [REDACTED] This is Lieutenant [REDACTED]  
16 Can you give us one sec real quick?

17 MR. FURUKAWA: Sure.

18 LT. [REDACTED] All right, we're back.

19 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay.

20 MR. [REDACTED] So, we originally got down  
21 there on a Saturday. We had flown a couple flights  
22 before the day of October 4th.

23 That day, it started around like 12:00 for  
24 us. I believe we had just gotten out of another -- a  
25 bag from flying from the day before. And, it was just

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1 like any normal day down in -- for an outback patrol.

2           The weather was beautiful. How the weather  
3 -- it wasn't any really like it was a kind of slightly  
4 strong wind but wasn't anything more than the normal --  
5 because it's an island.

6           And, we were flying around just the basic  
7 like a search pattern, I believe it was a Victor Sierra  
8 for a lifeboat that had been located, I'm not  
9 completely sure by whom, when my co-pilot saw something  
10 orange in the water.

11           We circled back around and that's when we  
12 discovered the deceased member in a Gumby suit.

13           MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. Do you know about what  
14 time this was?

15           MR. [REDACTED] I believe we took off around  
16 1300 or 1400.

17           MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. So, this may be -

18           MR. [REDACTED] But what --

19           MR. FURUKAWA: About --

20           MR. [REDACTED] It was like afternoon time,  
21 yes, sir.

22           MR. FURUKAWA: Afternoon? Okay. And, this  
23 was on what -- you said Saturday, October 4th?

24           MR. [REDACTED] No, I believe the 4th was not  
25 the Saturday. I think it was a couple days after that,

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1 I can't remember the exact day.

2 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. This was -- so Sunday,  
3 October 4, 2015?

4 MR. [REDACTED] I'd have to look at the  
5 calendar, but that does sound correct.

6 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. Okay, so the  
7 afternoon, the co-pilot saw the Gumby suit and then can  
8 you take it from there again?

9 MR. [REDACTED] Yes, after the co-pilot  
10 spotted the -- well, we didn't know at the time, but  
11 the orange in the water came down to a hover, probably  
12 around I'd have to -- probably like 300 feet for the  
13 hover to get down lower to check it out.

14 From then, we noticed that it was -- it  
15 appeared to be a man in a Gumby suit. So, we -- the  
16 aircraft commander decided to put me down just to  
17 verify that that's what it was.

18 We did a harness deployment of myself, which  
19 is a -- we have the bear hook on the helicopter and it  
20 goes into a lifting v-ring into my harness. And, the  
21 flight mech lowered me down to the water. I swam over  
22 to the Gumby suit.

23 At this time, got within about three to five  
24 feet of it and saw that the member was clearly  
25 deceased, very deformed, unrecognizable at that time.

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1 I then looked back to the helicopter, gave  
2 them a cut throat signal to indicate that the member  
3 was not alive. And then, the helicopter moved in with  
4 a sling to pick me up, which is the indication to  
5 pretty much get back in the helicopter. So, that's  
6 what I did at the time.

7 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. You said, you got  
8 within three to five feet and saw that the deceased was  
9 unrecognizable. So, could you tell, male, female,  
10 black, white, anything like that?

11 MR. [REDACTED] I, honestly, I could not. It  
12 was very bloated and like blueish skin tone.

13 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. Okay, thank you, [REDACTED]

14 And, while you were in the water, can you  
15 estimate the seas? How many feet, you know, the seas  
16 were?

17 MR. [REDACTED] Probably one to two feet.

18 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. Can you estimate the  
19 wind and the wind speed?

20 MR. [REDACTED] If I had to guess, probably  
21 10, maybe 20 knots, if that.

22 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. Okay, because this is  
23 after -- this is the first time that the weather got --  
24 was nice enough for you guys to go and do your SAR  
25 mission?

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1                   Okay, let's see --

2                   MR. WEBB:   What was the -- this is Paul  
3 Webb.

4                   What was the air temperature? Did you have  
5 any idea what the air temperature was at that point?

6                   MR. [REDACTED]   If I had to guess about the  
7 air temperature, probably 80s, 70s, 80s, I was in a  
8 short wetsuit. And, the water was comfortable, it  
9 wasn't cold.

10                  MR. FURUKAWA:   Okay. Okay, and the weather?

11                  MR. [REDACTED]   It was -- the day, it was very  
12 nice.

13                  MR. FURUKAWA:   Okay.

14                  MR. [REDACTED]   Clear skies.

15                  MR. FURUKAWA:   Okay, so blue skies?

16                  MR. [REDACTED]   Yes, sir.

17                  MR. FURUKAWA:   Okay. Okay, let's see, that  
18 was on Sunday. The day before and Monday, or the day  
19 before, Saturday, were you guys in the helo trying to  
20 do any SAR missions?

21                  MR. [REDACTED]   No, we were not. We had come  
22 in on a C-130.

23                  MR. FURUKAWA:   Oh, you'd come in on that  
24 Saturday? Okay, so this is your first SAR mission for  
25 the El Faro?

1 MR. [REDACTED] Yes.

2 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. And, let's see,

3 Lieutenant [REDACTED]

4 LT. [REDACTED] Yes?

5 MR. FURUKAWA: Can the -- can [REDACTED] tell us  
6 where the C-130 landed? Where they were based out of  
7 down there in the Carribean?

8 LT. [REDACTED] Yes, I don't have any issues  
9 with that.

10 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. So, [REDACTED] where you  
11 guys deployed to?

12 MR. [REDACTED] The Island of Great Inagua in  
13 the  
14 Bahamas.

15 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. Let's see, okay, and  
16 what happened after you were picked back up by the  
17 helicopter?

18 MR. [REDACTED] Once I was recovered by the  
19 helicopter, I put my helmet back on. So, back on ICS,  
20 back in my safety harness and we were discussing as a  
21 crew on what to do with the situation.

22 When we had the report of a possible --  
23 another possible survivor in a not too far location.  
24 So, we actually diverted towards that to try to find  
25 that person, which turned out to be -- it wasn't a

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1 person at all. It wasn't anything.

2 MR. FURUKAWA: Did you find anything?

3 MR. [REDACTED] No, when we went to the new  
4 location, it would be pure speculation, but whatever  
5 the plane saw, I guess it was just something shiny off  
6 the water. I believe they thought it was like a strobe  
7 or something or a person waving, I think, was the  
8 description. But, it ended up not being anything.

9 We circled around and we searched there for  
10 a while.

11 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. And, about what time  
12 of day was that?

13 MR. [REDACTED] It was still daylight out, so  
14 it was probably maybe 4:00 or 5:00 at that point.

15 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay.

16 MR. [REDACTED] If I had to guess.

17 MR. WEBB: This is Paul Webb.

18 How long were you airborne at that point  
19 when you were looking in the second location?

20 MR. [REDACTED] We were probably airborne for  
21 maybe two or three hours, like during that second  
22 location, too.

23 MR. WEBB: So, how much more search time did  
24 you have available to you?

25 MR. [REDACTED] We have until -- we use about

1 six hours for gas, that's with a full bag of gas. And,  
2 I cannot recall if we had a full bag of gas or not.

3 MR. WEBB: And, once you determined that  
4 that was a false sighting, did you -- were you ordered  
5 back to the other location or were you done with the  
6 mission at that point?

7 MR. [REDACTED] No, I believe that sector told  
8 us to go back and relocate the body, which we had  
9 trouble doing at this point because it was getting  
10 dark. I do remember that.

11 MR. WEBB: And, how did you [REDACTED] the body  
12 before you left?

13 MR. [REDACTED] We had an SLDMB. It's pretty  
14 much like a data [REDACTED] buoy. It puts off like a  
15 signal and it pretty much opens up out of its package.  
16 It kind of looks like a giant kite is the easiest way  
17 to describe it with like a transmitter on it from the  
18 helicopter near the Gumby suit.

19 MR. WEBB: Okay. Have you deployed those  
20 before personally? Have you done those or is that the  
21 flight mech's job?

22 MR. [REDACTED] Usually the flight mech's job.

23 MR. WEBB: Do you know if he has deployed  
24 them before or was he proficient at that?

25 MR. [REDACTED] I do not know.

1 LT. [REDACTED] This is Lieutenant [REDACTED]  
2 Did you deploy it that time or did the  
3 flight mech deploy it?

4 MR. [REDACTED] I believe the flight mech  
5 deployed the SLDMB.

6 LT. [REDACTED] Okay.

7 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay, this is Jon Furukawa.

8 And, can you explain what a flight mech is,  
9 please?

10 MR. [REDACTED] Yes. He's a hoist operator is  
11 the easiest way to describe for operationally. So, he  
12 controls the hoist going up and down to recover me or  
13 the rescue items.

14 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. So, flight mech is  
15 short for flight mechanic or flight maintenance?

16 MR. [REDACTED] He's flight mechanic, that is  
17 correct.

18 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. Okay, so --

19 MR. WEBB: This is Paul Webb again.

20 When you got back on scene, how long did you  
21 search for?

22 MR. [REDACTED] For the Gumby suit again?

23 MR. WEBB: Yes.

24 MR. [REDACTED] I would probably have to guess  
25 maybe another hour, hour and a half trying to relocate.

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1 MR. WEBB: Okay. What type of search  
2 pattern was deployed?

3 MR. [REDACTED] I do not recall the search  
4 pattern that the pilots were using.

5 MR. WEBB: All right, thank you.

6 MR. FURUKAWA: And, [REDACTED] this is Jon  
7 Furukawa again.

8 Can you -- we've been using the term Gumby  
9 suit, can you just -- what's a Gumby suit?

10 MR. [REDACTED] A Gumby suit is a survival  
11 suit. The best way to describe it, it's -- it would be  
12 like a -- it's kind of like a wetsuit, like a beefed up  
13 wetsuit that helps the member stay afloat and keeps  
14 warmth in by letting -- you still have water on you,  
15 but the water -- your body heat warms up the water  
16 inside the suit.

17 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. And, the -- when you  
18 first went down for the survival suit and you  
19 discovered the human remains, did you notice any  
20 markings on the suit? Like, was it stenciled El Faro  
21 or anything like that?

22 MR. [REDACTED] Initially, I cannot recall if  
23 the markings -- if there was any markings on it.

24 MR. FURUKAWA: And, this is --

25 Hey you guys, it's Jon Furukawa, for some

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1 reason, I -- well, I know the reason, I hung up on you  
2 guys. Sorry about that.

3 So, for the last minute, I was offline.

4 Where were we? We were talking about the  
5 survival suit and the markings. What did you say after  
6 that?

7 MR. [REDACTED] My answer to that question was  
8 I do not recall if there were any markings on the Gumby  
9 suit.

10 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. And, did anybody ask a  
11 question after that?

12 MR. WEBB: Yes, Jon, I've asked a couple of  
13 questions. First, when was he notified of the mission?  
14 And, do you want to answer it again, [REDACTED]

15 MR. [REDACTED] Yes, I do not recall when that  
16 was.

17 MR. WEBB: Okay. And, I'm just going down  
18 some pre-flight type of questioning to get an idea what  
19 they were doing.

20 So, the second question was the pre-flight  
21 discussion on the mission. And, go ahead, [REDACTED]

22 MR. [REDACTED] For every flight, not just  
23 these flights, we go over a lot of safety things and a  
24 lot of pretty much like pre-checks which we have like a  
25 printed out check sheet that the pilots always go over,

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1 which some of them are like safety to make sure that  
2 the airplane looks good, make sure we got a good pre-  
3 flight, make sure that the crew's feeling well, well  
4 and rested, no like lingering effects from a cold or  
5 anything like that. There's a whole check list on  
6 that.

7           And then, we always go over weather and we  
8 always brief these items before the flight and make  
9 sure everybody feels safe to fly and ready for the  
10 mission to start.

11           MR. WEBB: Okay. Understanding the Coast  
12 Guard's ORM, can you remember what your GAR score or  
13 what the ORM was, the Operational Risk Management score  
14 was for that mission?

15           MR. [REDACTED] I do not remember the exact  
16 number. I would probably -- it was in the green,  
17 though. We all felt really -- we all felt safe, we  
18 felt good. The weather had passed and cleared up, so  
19 we all felt good about that. It wasn't a high risk, in  
20 my mind, or I believe in any of the other crew members  
21 minds.

22           MR. WEBB: Okay.

23           MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. And, this is Jon  
24 Furukawa again.

25           Can you, for the acronyms, ORM is Operation

1 Research -- or, I'm sorry --

2 MR. [REDACTED] Operational Risk Management.

3 MR. FURUKAWA: Risk Management? And GAR is,  
4 G-A-R, GAR is?

5 MR. [REDACTED] It's one of the methods that  
6 we use, it's goes by green, amber, red and what's the  
7 other -- I'm brain farting on that myself. I'll get  
8 you that actual here in a minute. How's that?

9 MR. FURUKAWA: No, no, but green, amber,  
10 red. So, red would be dangerous, amber something in  
11 between and green is safe? Is that the --

12 MR. [REDACTED] Right.

13 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. Okay, and, Paul, did  
14 you have any more questions?

15 MR. WEBB: About the pre-flight, no. I'm  
16 looking through, down my list. Yes, a lot of my  
17 questions have been answered already.

18 So, I think one of the things we stopped at  
19 when we were talking earlier, so when you got back up  
20 in the helicopter, you guys had a discussion, the  
21 flight crew had a discussion on whether or not you were  
22 going to take the remains on board or just how to [REDACTED]  
23 it?

24 MR. [REDACTED] When I got back on the ICS,  
25 yes, it's crew resources, CRM is another, I guess,

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1 acronym that we always use, too. It's just we  
2 discussed what -- like what the plan of attack should  
3 be.

4 A lot of that comes also from not sector,  
5 but Op-BTC, who was giving us the directions. So, I  
6 vaguely remember the pilots talking to sector about  
7 what to do. And, I remember we didn't pick up the  
8 Gumby suit. Then we got diverted towards what they had  
9 thought was another person.

10 MR. FURUKAWA: This is Jon Furukawa again.

11 Could you repeat that, that you were -- the  
12 crew decided not to pick up the Gumby suit or you guys  
13 got diverted before that?

14 MR. [REDACTED] We got diverted. That was  
15 between the Op-BTC watch standards and my pilots.

16 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. And, what is the Op-  
17 BTC watch standard?

18 MR. [REDACTED] He's like, I don't know how to  
19 describe it.

20 LT. [REDACTED] This is Lieutenant [REDACTED]  
21 Op-BTC's a shore side command that runs some  
22 of our deployed helicopters. So, they kind of had the  
23 radio guard for the helos that were flying out of the  
24 Bahamas.

25 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay.

1 LT. [REDACTED] And -- go ahead.

2 MR. FURUKAWA: And, that was Op-BTC?

3 LT. [REDACTED] Yes.

4 MR. FURUKAWA: And, what does Op-BTC stand  
5 for, though?

6 LT. [REDACTED] Operation Bahamas Turks and  
7 Caicos.

8 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay.

9 MR. WEBB: This is Paul Webb.

10 So, you're not sure where the decision was  
11 to not hoist it? Was that a District 7 decision or was  
12 that the pilot's call on that?

13 MR. [REDACTED] I do not know if that is  
14 correct.

15 MR. WEBB: Okay.

16 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay, anything else, Paul?

17 MR. WEBB: How far away do you think that  
18 the other sighting of the other survival suit or  
19 flashing light? How far away was that approximately,  
20 say flight time wise from the location that you found  
21 the remains?

22 MR. [REDACTED] I would honestly -- I honestly  
23 don't know.

24 MR. WEBB: Okay. As an AST, do you have any  
25 involvement with the SLDMB maintenance or the storage

1 of them?

2 MR. [REDACTED] No, we do not.

3 MR. WEBB: Who's in charge of that at the  
4 air station or at the Op-BTC?

5 MR. [REDACTED] The AET's are at the air  
6 station and those guys are the Aviation Electronic  
7 Technicians.

8 MR. WEBB: Do you know -- do you remember  
9 what time you guys departed to head back to your base?

10 MR. [REDACTED] I remember it was after dark,  
11 but I do not remember the exact time.

12 MR. WEBB: Okay.

13 I don't have many more questions here, Jon.

14 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. Why don't you just  
15 continue on, Paul?

16 MR. WEBB: Excuse me?

17 MR. FURUKAWA: Do you want to continue on?

18 MR. WEBB: Yes, go ahead.

19 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. So, [REDACTED] you  
20 mentioned the data marker buoy was an SLDMB, is that  
21 Sierra Lima Bravo Mike Bravo?

22 MR. [REDACTED] Sierra Lima Delta Mike Bravo.

23 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. And, what does it  
24 stand for?

25 MR. [REDACTED] I know the DMB stands for Data

1 Marker Buoy, but I do not know what the SL stands for.

2 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. Okay, let's see, [REDACTED]  
3 how many other missions did you fly for the -- looking  
4 for the El Faro?

5 MR. [REDACTED] We flew three days --

6 MR. FURUKAWA: Three days?

7 MR. [REDACTED] -- on the El Faro.

8 MR. FURUKAWA: So, that would have been  
9 Sunday, Monday, Tuesday?

10 MR. [REDACTED] Yes.

11 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. Did you guys find any  
12 other survival debris like lifeboat, life rafts, life  
13 rings or other survival suits?

14 MR. [REDACTED] No, we did not.

15 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. Okay.

16 MR. WEBB: And, were the treaties, was that  
17 one stories per day?

18 MR. [REDACTED] Yes, if I call correctly.

19 MR. WEBB: Okay.

20 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay.

21 MR. [REDACTED] I believe we had two eight  
22 hour flights and then one three hour flight. The three  
23 hour flight, I believe, being on the last day.

24 MR. FURUKAWA: You had two eight hour  
25 flights? Is that what you said?

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1 MR. [REDACTED] Yes, roughly.

2 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. So, that was more than  
3 a full bag? Was that two stories a day?

4 MR. [REDACTED] No, we can get a waiver to go  
5 over six hours which is what our bag limits are. It  
6 has to be approved, I believe, through our commanding  
7 officer or Ops boss to take back off again for more  
8 gas. But, I believe, if I'm not mistaken, we cannot  
9 fly much -- the waiver is for eight hours before we  
10 have to get another waiver.

11 And, if we land over six, then we need the  
12 waiver to take back off again. So, that's how that  
13 process works.

14 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. And, let's see, the  
15 crew of the helicopter, what did it consist of? There  
16 are two pilots, correct?

17 MR. [REDACTED] Yes, that is correct.

18 MR. FURUKAWA: So, it's a pilot and command,  
19 a co-pilot and then --

20 MR. [REDACTED] Yes.

21 MR. FURUKAWA: -- you're the rescue swimmer.

22 MR. [REDACTED] Yes.

23 MR. FURUKAWA: The flight mech is the hoist  
24 operator. Is there anybody else?

25 MR. [REDACTED] For those missions, no,

1 there's usually not.

2 MR. FURUKAWA: So, a crew of four?

3 MR. [REDACTED] Yes, that is correct.

4 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay.

5 MR. [REDACTED] And, that's what it was that  
6 day.

7 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. Okay, Paul, do you  
8 have any more questions?

9 MR. WEBB: No, actually, I don't think I do.  
10 I think I got most of them are answered.

11 Also, on the GAR, that's a General  
12 Assessment of Risk is the official name of the GAR.

13 MR. FURUKAWA: General Assessment of Risk?  
14 Okay.

15 MR. WEBB: Yes.

16 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. And, Patty, any  
17 questions for [REDACTED]

18 MS. FINSTERBUSCH: Hi, [REDACTED] this is Patty  
19 Finsterbusch from TOTE Services.

20 You mentioned that you never saw any other  
21 survival equipment. Did you find other items,  
22 materials, containers, anything?

23 MR. [REDACTED] There was a lot of debris in  
24 the water.

25 MS. FINSTERBUSCH: In the area where you

1 found -- located the Gumby suit, was there a lot of  
2 stuff there, debris?

3 MR. [REDACTED] Yes, ma'am. There was a good  
4 amount. One of the things I remember clearly was a  
5 Mickey Mouse like stuffed animal was not too far from  
6 the Gumby suit.

7 And then, flying -- the search patterns that  
8 we flew and we usually flew on the debris fields  
9 throughout those three days, so there was what appeared  
10 to be wood, just different materials, trash, stuff like  
11 that in the water.

12 MS. FINSTERBUSCH: Okay, thank you.

13 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. And, Louis?

14 MR. O'DONNELL: No further questions, Jon.

15 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. Paul, last chance?

16 MR. WEBB: I think that's it.

17 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay.

18 MR. WEBB: Got everything I was -- that I  
19 had written down.

20 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. Okay, thank everybody.

21 And, let's see, so, [REDACTED] as we're ending  
22 the interview, I'd like to ask you, is there anything  
23 that you'd like to add or change?

24 MR. [REDACTED] No.

25 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. Are there any

1 questions that we should have asked you but we didn't  
2 ask you?

3 MR. [REDACTED] No.

4 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. Do you have any  
5 suggestions for preventing a recurrence of an accident  
6 like this?

7 MR. [REDACTED] I do not.

8 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. And, is there anybody  
9 else that we should interview? We're planning to  
10 interview next week the pilot and command, but is there  
11 anybody else that we should interview?

12 MR. [REDACTED] Not that I could think of.

13 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. Well, that's it then.  
14 Thank you for your time, [REDACTED]

15 MR. [REDACTED] Thank you guys.

16 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. So, right now, it is  
17 1446 and we're ending the interview with AST II [REDACTED]

18 [REDACTED]

19 And, I'm going to go off recording,  
20 stopping.

21 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went  
22 off the record at 2:46 p.m.)

23

24

25

C E R T I F I C A T E

MATTER: El Faro Incident  
October 1, 2015  
NTSB Accident No. DCA16MM001  
Interview of [REDACTED]

DATE: 02-11-16

I hereby certify that the attached transcription of page 1 to 28 inclusive are to the best of my professional ability a true, accurate, and complete record of the above referenced proceedings as contained on the provided audio recording; further that I am neither counsel for, nor related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this action in which this proceeding has taken place; and further that I am not financially nor otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.

[REDACTED]

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